

## **SENATOR JOHN BREAUX**

### **Opening Statement**

#### **"Family Caregivers and the Older Americans Act Act: Caring for the Caregivers"**

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding today's hearing on the important topic of family caregiving. Two years ago this Committee held a hearing for the introduction of the National Family Caregiver Support Act, a bill that was successfully authorized as part of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act last year.

Today we hope to hear more about the implementation of the National Family Caregiver program. The Administration on Aging has been tasked with interpreting the newly enacted legislation and seeing that federal dollars flow to states in a timely fashion. We know that some states are further along in the development of their family caregiving plans than others.

While state-by-state family caregiving networks are being developed, we want to revisit the original intent of the National Family Caregiver Support Act. I look forward to hearing from real caregivers and those who represent them. Their message is important. We must be sure that in our haste to distribute the money that we listen to those who provide day-to-day care for their family members and that in turn, we create family caregiving support systems to provide meaningful assistance to the wives, husbands, sons and daughters who care for their aging relatives day in and day out.

Long-term care is one of the most daunting social issues facing our country. By passing the National Family Caregivers Act, Congress has taken a step in the right direction. Much more needs to be done and this Committee will certainly continue to address long-term care needs.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses and working with the Administration on Aging on the implementation of one of our country's most exciting and necessary federal programs.